

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02070 121625Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 SS-15

PM-05 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 IO-13 L-03

ACDA-12 (ISO) W

-----109094 122255Z /46

O R 121524Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7581

SECDEF WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2070

FOR NEA/ARN DRAPER FROM TEAM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MORG, LE

SUBJ: TEAM PROGRESS REPORT - STUDY IN CONTRASTS

1. TEAM HAS COMPLETED ABOUT HALF SCHEDULED UNIT AND FACILITY VISITS. DURING PASTTWO DAYS MEMBERS TOOK MORE OR LESS INTENSIVE LOOK AT MT LEBANON REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS AND BRIGADE IN SARBA, PROVISIONAL MIXED BATTALION AT RUMIEH AND NORTHERN REGIONAL HEAD-QUARTERS WITH RUDIMENTARY 2D INFANTRY BRIGADE IN TRIPOLI. IMPRES-SIONS DERIVED FROM THESE VISITS PROVIDE STUDY IN CONTRASTS.

2. SEVERAL BASIC POINTS CAN BE MADE. FOREMOST AMONG THEM IS DECEPTIVEMESS OF EQUIPMENT INVENTORY FIGURES. CONSERVATIVELY JUDGED, PERHAPS 25 PERCENT OF WHAT HAS BEEN REPORTED AS ON HAND IS ACTUALLY USABLE - IF THE SAMPLE WE HAVE VIEWED IS REPRESENTATIVE. WHAT IS WORKING IS OF SUCH VARIED AGE AND ORIGIN THAT IT CONSTI-TUTES A LOGISTICAL NIGHTMARE. TRAINING IS INCONSISTENT, VARYING FROM LITTLE OR NOTHING IN SOME LOCATIONS TO COMMENDABLY ENTHUSIASTIC (IF SUPPORTKB

3. SARBA MOST DISAPPOINTING. THOUGH LARGE NUMBER OF TROOPS (MOSTLY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 02070 121625Z

CORPORALS AND SERGEANTS) ON HAND, NO TRAINING OF ANY TYPE GOING ON DURING ENTIRE MORNING VISIT. SOLDIERS APPEARED DIFFIDENT, UNIFORMS NOT UNIFORM AT ALL AND SHOLE CASERNE EXHUDED GENERAL AIR OF DEPRESSION. SARBA IS HOME OF TEN OF SUPPOSEDLY EXTANT TWELVE FRENCH 155 MM HOWITZERS. THOUGH THESE WEAPONS PERHAPS AS WELL MAINTAINED AS ANY OF OLD EQUIPMENT VIEWED (ONE OF TEAM'S RESIDENT ARTILLERYMEN WAS PERMITTED TO TAKE CRITICALLY CLOSE LOOK) LAF HAS

NO REPEAT NO PRIME MOVERS FOR THESE WEAPONS AND VIRTUALLY NO AMMUNITION. WE TOLD THAT AMMO ON HAND BEFORE CIVIL WAR SUBSTANTIALLY EXPENDED DURING PERIOD GUNS WERE IN QUOTE OTHER UNQUOTE HANDS. VARIETY OF OLD ARMORED CARS (SARACEN, SALADIN, PANHARD) ON HAND IN VARIOUS STATES OF DISREPAIR WITH FEW MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL AVAILABLE FAR BEHIND POWER CURVE IN ATTEMPTS AT RESTORATION. REGIONAL COMMANDER REPORTED THAT SOME 300 RECRUITS IN TRAINING AT SARBA. TEAM ASKED TO SEE NEW TROOPS BUT WAS TOLD THEY WERE ON FIRING RANGE. NO ONE SEEMED TO KNOW EXACT LOCATION OF RANGE.

4. UNIT AT RUMIEH APPEARED TO US (CORROBORATED BY DATT) TO BE ONE OF THOSE WHOSE ULTIMATE LOYALTY OPEN TO SERIOUS QUESTION. UNIT IS QUARTERED IN FORMER FEDERAL JAIL WHICH PROVIDES VIRTUAL FORTRESS. TEAM ARRIVED AFTER END OF TRAINING DAY 80800 TO 1300). ONCE AGAIN SCENE WAS ONE OF CONSIDERABLE DIVERSITY OF QUESTIONABLY MAINTAINED EQUIPMENT. NONE OF NEW M-16'S APPARENTLY ON HAND - NOT SURPRISING IF OUR ANALYSIS OF LOYALTY CORRECT. TROOPS WERE BETTER LOOKING THAN AT SARBA. CDR OF SMALL ARMORED FORMATION WITHIN UNIT OFFERED DEMONSTRATION OF AMX-13 (105 MM GUN) TANKS. THREE OF SEVEN WE COUNTED WERE STARTED ALL SURPRISINGLY RAPIDLY - AND WITH MUCH ECLAT AND SOME DESTRUCTION OF PAVEMENT, DRAINS, ETC BY NOW PADLESS TRACKS, TANKS RATTLED OFF DOWN HILL AND OUT OF SIGHT. ALL RETURNED FEW MINUTES LATER. CDR TOLD US ALL SEVEN OPERATIONAL BUT PETROL ECONOMY DICTATED DEPLOYMENT ONLY OF THREE. OTHER EQUIPMENT RANGED FROM ENGINELESS OBVIOUS JUNK TO RAGTAG ITEMS WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN COMBAT EFFECTIVE FOR LIMITED PERIOD.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 02070 121625Z

5. TRIPOLI HIGH POINT OF LAST TWO DAYS' ACTIVITIES. NEW REGIONAL CDR ENTHUSIASTIC MUSLIM OFFICER WHO APPEARED TO BE BUILDING WHAT MAY SHORTLY BE LOYAL, VIABLE MILITARY FORCE IF EQUIPMENT CAN BE FOUND FOR IT. KHOURY RECENTLY ISSUED 200 NEW M-16'S AND SUBORDINATE BDE HAD ABOUT 50 FAL AND 20 AK-47'S GIFTED BY LOCAL ADF SYRIANS. ONLY REPEAT ONLY ADDITIONAL GEAR COMPRISED TWO JEEPS (ONE NEW LAST WEEK), THREE OLD LORRIES, ONE M-113 THAT WAS PARADED TRIUMPHANTLY AROUND CASERNE SEVERAL TIMES TO SHOW UT IT WORKED. THAT WAS TOTALITY TO SUPPORT 800 MAN FORCE. NONETHELESS, WE ABLE TO VIEW CONTINGENTS DOING CLOSE ORDER DRILL, FIELD STRIPPING SOME OF FEW M-16'S, OR GOING THROUGH SPIRITED CLOSE COMBAT DRILL USING PRE-WAR (PERHAPS PRE-FRANCO/PRUSSION WAR) FRENCH RELIC RIFLES. CDR QUITE CANDID WITH US THAT ONLY 200 OR SO TROOPS TRAINED ANY ONE DAY. REST EMPLOYED IN SELF HELP RECONSTRUCTION OF CASERNE GUTTED ALMOST TOTALLY AND LOOTED DURING CIVIL WAR. PARTS OF CASERNE STILL COVERED WITH VEHICLES AND OTHER GEAR THAT IS TOTALLY IRRETRIEVABLE. UNITS LACK EVEN MEANS TO RID AREA OF THESE UNFORTUNATE REMINDERS OF REGION'S CURRENT IMPOTENCE.

6. TEAM MEMBERS HAD EARNEST PRIVATE DISCUSSION WITH MUSLIM MAJOR COMMANDING 2D INF BDE AT TRIPOLI. CDR EXPRESSED UNQUALIFIED

SUPPORT FOR CONFESSIONALLY MIXED FORCE. THOUGH REGION CDR HAD REPORTED CURRENT 70/30 MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN RATION, APPEARED THAT CURRENT CHRISTIAN POLULATION CONSIDERABLY LESS. BDE CDR ALSO EXPRESSED ENTHUSIASM FOR ARMY CDR KHOURY AND STEPS LATTER TAKING TO REBUILD NATIONAL ARMY. LAST CONVERSATION AT TRIPOLI- NEEDLESS TO SAY- CONSISTED OF EMBARRASSING INDICATIONS OF FAITH IN FUTURE MASSIVE US SUPPORT FOR LEBANON.

7. NEW SUBJECT: TEAM PLANS VISITS OVER NEXT SEVERAL DAYS TO MUSLIM DOMINATED HENRY CHAHAB CASERNE IN BEIRUT, FAYYADIYEH BARRACKS, REGIONAL AND BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AT ABLAH. FOLLOW-ON DISCUSSIONS ALSO PLANNED FOR ARMY HEADQUARTERS. AT THIS POINT WE PLANNING OUT-BRIEF AMBASSADOR AND LAF CDR ON TUESDAY, 18 APRIL WITH DEPARTURE FOR STUTTGART FOLLOWING DAY. SUBJECT CONFIRMATION, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 02070 121625Z

WILL DEBRIEF USCINCEUR REPS ON THURSDAY 20 APRIL AND RETURN TO DC EITHER LATE THAT DAY OR DAY FOLLOWING. PARKER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY EQUIPMENT, ARMED FORCES, PROGRESS REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT02070
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780157-1076
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780467/aaaaceuq.tel
Line Count: 138
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 458961b2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2998885
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TEAM PROGRESS REPORT - STUDY IN CONTRASTS
TAGS: MORG, LE
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/458961b2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014